

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 123758

FOR US DEL ILO

FOLLOWING REPEAT BRUSSELS 4652 ACTION SECSTATE INFO MOSCOW

DATED 24 MAY 75

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 04652

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PLAB, UR, BE

SUBJECT: SOVIET STRATEGY VIS-A-VIS LABOR MOVEMENT: PLO
IN THE ILO

1. HOUTHUYS, THE LEADER OF THE LARGEST LABOR UNION IN BELGIUM,
SEES SOVIET STRATEGY VIS-A-VIS THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN THE
WEST AS HAVING TWO MAJOR ELEMENTS:

A. THE SOVIETS PORTRAY U.S. LABOR UNIONS AS EXTENSIONS OF
CAPITALISM AND, ESPECIALLY, THE U.S.-DOMINATED MULTINATIONAL
FIRMSS AND, THUS, AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE AMERICAN EFFORT
TO SEIZE CONTROL OF THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION
IN EUROPE. HOUTHUYS SAID THAT, UNFORTUNATELY, THE SOVIETS ARE
CONDUCTING THIS CAMPAIGN WITH INTELLIGENCE, SUBTILITY, AND
DILIGENCE. ALSO, HE SAID, THERE WAS NO ORGANIZED COUNTER-
CAMPAIGN; THE FIELD WAS LEFT TO THE SOVIETS.

B. THE SOVIETS GRASP EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO DIVIDE U.S. AND
EUROPEAN LABOR MOVEMENTS, HOUTHUYS CONTENTS. A PRIME SOVIET
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OBJECTIVE IS TO SEPARATE FURTHER THE EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN

LABOR MOVEMENTS IN THE ILO. TO THIS END, HOUTHUYS EXPECTS THE SOVIETS TO EXPLOIT ISSUES LIKE PLO REPRESENTATION IN THE ILO. NOTHING WOULD PLEASE THE SOVIETS MORE, HOUTHUYS SAID, THAN TO HAVE THE PLO REPRESENTATION ACCEPTED AND, AS A CONSEQUENCE, PROVOKE AFL-CIO WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ILO.

2. HOUTHUYS ADVOCATES CLOSE CONCERTATION OF AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN TACTICS AT THE ILO CONFERENCE IN GENEVA--ESPECIALLY REGARDING CONTENTIOUS ISSUES LIKE PLO REPRESENTATION. HOUTHUYS SEES THE OBJECTIVES OF AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN LABOR AS THE SAME. WHAT IS NEEDED, HE THINKS, IS CLOSER COOPERATION ON TACTICS. HOUTHUYS THINKS THAT THE USSR MIGHT NOT PUSH AS HARD FOR PLO REPRESENTATION IN THE ILO IF THE U.S. AND EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVES LET THE SOVIETS KNOW THAT, IN EXCHANGE FOR LESS PERSISTENCE ON PLO REPRESENTATION, THEY WOULD EASE UP ON EFFORTS TO HIGHLIGHT DEFICIENCIES IN SOVIET LABOR PRACTICES. HOUTHUYS CONSIDERS THAT TACTICAL COOPERATION BETWEEN AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN LABOR CAN BE PRODUCTIVE ONLY IF BOTH SIDES REJECT RIGID PRECONCEPTIONS AND SEARCH TOGETHER FOR PRAGMATIC MEANS TO ATTAIN COMMON OBJECTIVES. FIRESTONE

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